

## 1855 SPEECH REFLECTS ON PIONEERING Life in Early Ohio

The DISPATCH is indebted to Susan Bidwell-Williams, Gilbert, AZ, for this copy of a speech delivered in 1855 by Amos Dunham (b. 1782, CT) (6)(Deacon John 1, Rev. Jonathan 2, Jonathan 3, Jonathan 4, Jonathan 5) to the inhabitants of the then newly-created Dunham Township in Washington County, Ohio, where he & his father had settled as early as 1803. Due to the length of the speech, it will have to be serialized, but it is most interesting in the insights it brings on the rigors of pioneer life & the inclusion of Amos Dunham's personal philosophy. Here is the first part:

### ADDRESS

Delivered at a meeting for the Celebration of the Setting off  
THE TOWNSHIP OF DUNHAM  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, OHIO  
BY AMOS DUNHAM, ESQ.

Inhabitants of the Township of Dunham:

A short time since I received a letter from my Nephew, Hollister [slw: Albert<sup>8</sup>], informing me that the people of this place had been set off into a new township, and had given it the name of Dunham, with a request that I would meet with them at this time to commemorate the event. Being pleased with the idea of once more seeing my old friends and neighbors collected together, and being highly gratified with the honor conferred on my name, I readily accepted the invitation, and now stand before you. Under these circumstances I feel it to be my duty, and it is certainly my desire, to return to you my most hearty thanks for the honor thus unexpectedly bestowed upon my name. But being wholly inadequate, either by nature, education or practice, to speaking in public, I have, in a hurried and unconnected manner, committed to paper a few reminiscences of the past, that may not be wholly inappropriate to the present occasion.

Fifty-two years ago this summer, my father undertook to follow the rangeline through from Turkey-hen to Belpre, then an unbroken wilderness. He followed the line until he came to the creek between Sylvester Ellenwood's and Issac Blackford's; he there lost the line, and had no other means of finding his way out than to follow the creek down. The land where Mr. Goddard now lives struck his fancy. He went to General Putnam's land office, and found it owned by a Mr. Kilbourn, then living at the mouth of Duck Creek, above Marietta. He purchased the lot for 2.00 an acre, on a long credit, and in the Fall, made some preparations for moving onto his purchase. Father took the west half, eighty acres. I took sixty acres next; and the east end, twenty acres were given to Amos Delano [slw: a step-son of Jonathan's; & half-brother to Amos]. At this time, there was no house or road between here and the river; and down the creek, the first house was Elihu Clark's, on the school lot; then Mr. Cooper's and Benjamin Bickfords. Down further, near the mill, were John Tilton's, Asa Dain's, Mr. Foster's and Mr. Halsey's. The inconvenience of having no road was a very serious matter, and immediately after I moved on my farm, I drew a petition to the trustees of the township (we then belonged to Belpre township) for a road from Miles' Mills to the river near Little Island, a distance of nine miles; but finding we could not work our tax on such a road, I abandoned the idea for a township road, and petitioned the commissioners for a county road, which was granted, and the road laid out; but the Surveyor neglected to make returns to the Commissioners and we failed again. In the meantime, I had to walk a distance of nearly seven miles (on a causeway back of Lewis' store) to do my highway work.. The third petition succeeded.

In the spring of 1804, I commenced working on my lot, and lived in quite a retiring manner. I slept in my little camp, a short distance back of where Mr. Goddard now lives; cooked my own pork and potatoes; kept a good fire in front of my camp at night; laid myself quietly down on my bed of leaves; and



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was soon hushed to sleep by the united melody of wolves and owls; and from Monday morning to Saturday night was not disturbed by the sight of a single human being. Every night wolves would commence howling on one hill and be answered by another flock on another hill, and another, until it appeared as if the woods were full of them. Our sheep, after we got them, had to be enclosed in yards near the house every night, or they would be caught. I had fourteen killed in one night, in the yard adjoining my house, one of which was not over twelve feet from where I was sleeping.

For several years after I commenced farming, the wild turkeys would come on to my fields after the wheat was sown, in such numbers that the ground would be fairly black with them, and in the winter and spring the deer would come on in droves to take what the turkeys had left.

The pioneers of those days had a great many difficulties to contend with, that at this time would be thought insurmountable. As a specimen I will give you a short story about going to the mill. Harvesting was just finished, my supply of bread stuff was nearly exhausted, and my neighbors were worse off than myself; I threshed, out a grist of the wheat as quick as possible, put it on an ox sled, drew it out to the river,

put it in an old log stable, and returned home with my oxen. The next morning I went to the river, borrowed a canoe, packed my grain down the bank, put it in the canoe, and poled the canoe up to Devol's floating mill, on the Muskingum four or five miles above Marietta; and I had to stay about a week before my turn came for grinding; when ground I put it in the canoe, pushed ashore, packed my flour up the bank to a hand bolt, bolted it by hand, myself, packed it down to the canoe, pushed the canoe down to where I started from, carried my flour up to the old stable, took a small quantity on my back, and started for home. When I got down to about where Holine Hopkins now lives, I met Oren Newton and his wife, who had been out to my house on a visit, but Mrs. Dunham told them candidly she had not a bit of bread in the house and nothing to make any with, and that her neighbors were in the same situation; they, out of pity for her mounted their horses, and were on their way home, when they met me with my bag of flour, and were easily persuaded to return with me and finish their visit, and a good visit we had. People in those days used to enjoy visiting. So highly was it prized that my wife and myself have traveled on foot from where we lived to the river, to make a neighborly visit; why it should be so I know not; but from long experience I am convinced that it is invariably the case that people in a new country who are in low circumstances, and are rather hard put to it to bring the year about, are more friendly, more interested in each other's welfare, and more benevolent, than those who are placed in more desirous situations. I know that 50 years ago, when I had been at work all winter chopping a piece of heavily timbered bottom land, had the brush burned, and the logs ready for hauling in the spring, and my neighbors had theirs in the same situation (my neighbors then lived three or four miles off,) we used to unite our forces, roll one man's logs one day, another's the next, and so on till we finished the whole. I felt nearly the same interest in seeing my neighbor's land cleared that I did my own.

It is true we had one bad habit then which I hope is now in a great measure discontinued; that was, at all the log-rollings we had whiskey. Day after day I have spent in this manner, going from one house to another to pile their logs, and generally the day was closed with a ring of wrestling. For several years after we settled here, the settlement progressed but slowly. Stephen Taylor built a house where the graveyard now is, and lived there a short time, when his house took fire and was consumed. In the war of 1812, he enlisted, went into the army, and never returned. Gideon Rathbun [slw note: this name was underlined in my copy, perhaps by Ora Rothbone, as he typed it] settled where Mr. Holister now lives. A man by the name of Straight, built a house near the spring, back of Sylvester Ellenwood's, and lived there a short time, and Joseph Delano built on the creek west of Issac Bickford's.

About the year 1816 our settlement was increased by the arrival of Asahel Hollister and family, Jasper and Stephen Needham, Benedict Rathbun [slw: also underlined], and others. From this time we began to hold up our heads, and think that the time was fast approaching when we should be Somebody! From that time to the present, you are better acquainted with the history of the settlement than I am.

My friends, on this occasion, will it be arrogance in me - - will it be improper for me, an aged pioneer, whose locks are bleached by the frosts of 73 winters, to offer you a little advice, to point out to you the rocks and shoals, which my age and experience have enabled me to discover, on which the happiness of millions have been wrecked and lost?

I feel an attachment to this place. Twenty-one years' residence here, when it was emerging from a wilderness to a well-cultivated settlement, has engraved its memory on my mind so deeply that it will never be eradicated, and could I be a humble instrument in rescuing one of its inhabitants from the danger of impending evils with which they are surrounded, it would be a never-ceasing consolation to me during life.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



Dunham, George Earl.—Mr. Dunham is best known in Oneida county through his connection with the Utica Daily Press, which, from anything but an auspicious beginning, has become one of the leading and most prosperous papers in Central New York. The Press was started in March, 1882, by printers who had left the Herald two years before and whose facilities were decidedly limited. The first number had four all pages by no means of attractive appearance. Mr. Dunham went with the Press the following July and at one time or another has held every situation on the editorial staff. In 1886 he became president of the company and editor of the paper and has continued in these positions ever since. At the same election T. R. Proctor was chosen vice-president and Otto A. Meyer secretary, treasurer and business manager. The improvement and growth of the Press have been steady and permanent, till now it enjoys the largest circulation in its field. Mr. Dunham was born at Clayville, April 5, 1859, the only child of Moses E. Dunham, D. D., Ph. D., and Harriet (Hugbston) Dunham. He was graduated at Whitestown Seminary in 1875 and Hamilton College in 1879, the youngest member of his class at both institutions. He was for a year a clerk in the office of Edwin Baylies at Johnstown, N. Y., one of the ablest law writers of his time, and the author of Baylies' "Questions and Answers," Baylies on "Guaranty and Suretyship" and other standard works. In 1880 he was admitted to practice law and became a member of the firm of Baylies & Dunham. The firm did much work in the line of law book writing, being employed on various of William Wait's publications and several other legal books. A year later Mr. Dunham returned to Oneida county to become vice-principal of Whitestown Seminary, of which his father was principal. In 1882 he came to Utica as a reporter on the Press and has since remained with that paper. In 1888 he was appointed a manager of the United States Hospital for the Insane and was reappointed by Governor Flower and three years later by Governor Morton. He was appointed by Mayor Kinney chairman of the Utica Electric Light Commission and served three years. He was elected a trustee of Hamilton College in 1891 and was re-elected in 1895. Mr. Dunham married Helen L. Jones of Utica, January 9, 1884. They had one child, a daughter, who died in infancy.



GEORGE E. DUNHAM.

From a history of Oneida County, NY (1896), shared by Ann Eldred, we have this photograph of George Earl Dunham (b. 1859) (10) (Deacon John 1, John 2, Samuel 3, William 4, Jonathan 5, Samuel 6, Samuel 7, Moses 8, Rev. Moses E. 9), plus this sketch of his career.

### COMPLAINED OF STOMACH AND DIED IN FEW HOURS

J. T. Dunham, who was about seventy years old and was living with a daughter a mile and a half north of Powderly, died rather suddenly Wednesday evening. He was taken sick in the morning with hurting in the stomach and continued to suffer pain and to grow worse until death came in a few hours. He had not previously been ill and was in the enjoyment of fairly good health, considering his age. He had been a resident of the community for a number of years and is survived by four sons and a daughter. Two of the sons live at Powderly. The burial will take place today at Redhill graveyard.

JAN. 9, 1920 was the date of this Paris, TX MORNING NEWS clipping, which comes to DD from Marilyn Roth. James Taylor Dunham (1845-1920) was the son of Justice Dunham (8) (John 1, Benajah 2, Edmund 3, Jonathan 4, John 5, David 6, Jonathan 7). J. T.

had some very interesting descendants, including a Barnum & Bailey bronco rider/baseball player. We'd love to learn more about him!! Many thanks to Marilyn for all the great material.



1993 DUNHAM REUNION picture of ?????

P.C. ALGER

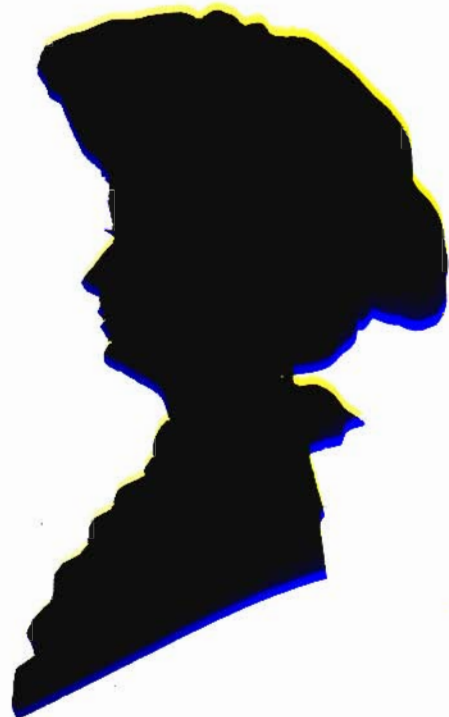
## DISTURBING ANCESTORS!

When Miriam Dunham Ferriss (1874-1940)(10)(Deacon John 1, John 2, John 3, Ebenezer 4, Ebenezer 5, Jonathan 6, Ralph 7, Francis S. 8, Samuel E. 9) decided she would like to join the DAR, about 1913, her younger brother, Frank, seemed eager to help her out. He didn't want her to have to bother her head with all that research --- No, no, NO! He would do it all for her! Of course the project took a while, but eventually the records came through, just as Frank had promised. Miriam opened the packet with excitement, & read the material -- with dismay! She could scarcely believe what her eyes were seeing, but it was all there in black & white: Horse thieves who met their fate at the end of a rope... Revolutionary War soldiers, yes -- but they were all deserters... Axe murderers.... One scoundrel after another... These were Dunhams?? How could her gentle & beloved father have descended from people like these? And she could NEVER submit details like these to the ladies in the DAR!, Never!! Her neck grew purple, & her lips narrowed to a thin, thin line. It was about a week later that Frank sent her a second, & much more respectable, package of ancestral data, explaining that there had been some kind of mix-up. It was a mix-up, of course, of his own making, & he must have had a lot of fun with his fake family tree. He was such an avid practical joker that she should have suspected his too-eager offer of assistance from the beginning. However, her sweet nature provided her brother with the perfect "patsy" for his tricks, as an adult as well as a child.

PHOTOS NEEDED! While we always love to get OLD photographs, they really don't have to be any older than LAST WEEK to be of interest, providing they are of Dunhams or Dunham descendants. Why not send in YOUR OWN picture? Then you can consider your DD "subscription" paid up.

DUNHAM DISPATCH

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A SILHOUETTE OF MIRIAM  
MADE ABOUT THIS TIME



## JOHN JACOB DUNHAM



JOHN JACOB DUNHAM  
1820----1914

John Jacob Dunham (1820-1914)(7)(Deac. John 1, Jonathan 2, Daniel 3, Jacob 4, Ebenezer 5, Jacob 6) was pictured in Sophie Dunham Moore's 1963 JACOB DUNHAM GENEALOGY, as seen at left. John Jacob was born in New York & moved to Michigan with his parents some time around 1835, where they first lived at Milford & (ca. 1850) settled in Highland, Oakland County. John Jacob was married in 1849 to Mary McDermott (1832-1905). (When only 5 years old, Mary McDermott, along with her brother, had been orphaned when her father was taken ill with cholera while on a business trip to Detroit. The mother left her children with a neighbor, Ferris Lockwood, while she went to Detroit in an attempt to nurse her husband back to health. However, she was also stricken with cholera, died, & what was intended as very temporary situation became permanent. The Lockwoods adopted the orphaned children. Mrs. Lockwood was John Jacob Dunham's sister.) A farmer, John Jacob Dunham also served as Justice of the Peace at Highland, & after he retired

from farming & moved to Alma, MI, he continued as Justice of the Peace there, working as long as he was in good enough health to get to his office. Altogether, he spent 50 years presiding over the Justice Court, & he was reported as gracing that office with deliberation & dignity. John Jacob was a large man, well over 6 foot in height & topping 200 pounds when he was in mid-life. 94 when he died, he retained a remarkably straight posture & patriarchal mein throughout his life. He & his wife were the parents of 7 children: 1/ Maj. Lockwood (1850); 2/ Frances G. (1852); 3/ Lydia Estelle (1854); 4/ Harrison Monroe (1857); 5/ Evelyn A. (1862); & 7/ John J. (1868).

QUERY - Mrs. Elsie Warner, 1472 S. Prescott Ave., Clearwater, FL 34616-2259, is searching for the parents of her great grandmother, EMILY DUNHAM (b. ca. 1799). Emily married Chauncey Alexander Hinckley on March 2, 1825 in Mansfield, CT. (Church records missing.) Emily died in 1886 & is buried with her husband in Evergreen Cemetery in Stokes, a small town near Rome, NY. The Hinckley plot is next to one where John & Martha (Smith) Dunham are buried. Her death certificate states that Emily was born in Connecticut.

NOTE: While Mansfield, CT was long a Dunham stronghold, DD has been unable to identify this Emily or to find a Martha Smith or Chauncey Alexander Hinckley in our index.